

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-54. (Cancelled)

55. (Currently Amended) A method for screening a candidate compounds capable of ~~modulating~~ ~~inhibiting~~ HMGI biological activity comprising the steps of:

- a) immobilizing an HMGI protein, or a fragment thereof, on a solid surface, wherein the fragment includes a biologically active region of the HMGI protein;
- b) incubating the HMGI protein, or the fragment thereof, with a candidate compound under conditions which promote optimal interaction;
- c) identifying whether the candidate compound binds to the HMGI protein, or the fragment thereof; and
- d) if the candidate compound does bind, further determining whether the candidate compound modulates HMGI biological activity of regulating expression of downstream target genes interferon- β from the ability of the candidate compound to bind to the HMGI protein, or the fragment thereof.

56. (Currently Amended) A method for screening a candidate compounds capable of inhibiting HMGI biological activity comprising the steps of:

- a) immobilizing an HMGI protein on a solid surface;
- b) incubating the HMGI protein with a candidate compound under conditions which promote optimal interaction;
- c) identifying whether the candidate compound binds to the HMGI protein; and
- d) if the candidate compound does bind, further determining whether the candidate compound ~~inhibits~~ ~~modulates~~ HMGI biological activity of regulating expression of

downstream target genes interferon- β from the its ability of the candidate compound to bind to the HMGI protein.

57. (Currently Amended) A method for screening a candidate compounds capable of inhibiting HMGI biological activity which comprises the steps of:

- a) immobilizing an HMGI protein on a solid surface;
- b) incubating the HMGI protein with a candidate compound under conditions which promote optimal interaction;
- c) identifying whether the candidate compounds ~~which~~ binds to the HMGI protein;
- d) transfecting into a cell a DNA construct which contains a reporter gene under the control of an HMGI protein-regulated promoter;
- e) administering to the cell the a candidate compound from step (c);
- f) measuring the levels of reporter gene expression in the presence and absence of the candidate compound; and
- g) determining from the levels of reporter gene expression whether the ~~which~~ candidate compounds inhibits ~~modulate~~ the HMGI biological activity of regulating expression of downstream target genes interferon- β .

58. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 55, 56, or 57, 58, or 59, wherein the candidate compound inhibits HMGI biological activity in the amount of at least 10%.

59. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 55, 56, or 57, 58, or 59, wherein the candidate compound inhibits HMGI biological activity in the amount of at least 25%.

60. (Currently Amended) A method for screening a candidate compounds capable of inhibiting HMGI biological activity which comprises the steps of:

- a) immobilizing an HMGI protein, or a fragment thereof, on a solid surface, wherein the fragment includes a biologically active region of the HMGI protein;
- b) incubating the HMGI protein, or the fragment thereof, with the a candidate compound under conditions which promote optimal interaction;
- c) identifying whether the candidate compounds ~~which~~ binds to the HMGI protein, or the fragment thereof;
- d) transfecting into a cell a DNA construct which contains a reporter gene under the control of an HMGI protein-regulated promoter;
- e) administering to the cell the a candidate compound from step (c);
- f) measuring the levels of reporter gene expression in the presence and absence of the candidate compound; and
- g) determining from the levels of reporter gene expression whether the candidate compounds inhibits ~~modulate~~ the HMGI biological activity of regulating expression of downstream target genes interferon- β .

61. (Previously Added) The method according to claim 60, wherein the candidate compound inhibits HMGI biological activity in the amount of at least 10%.

62. (Previously Added) The method according to claim 60, wherein the candidate compound inhibits HMGI biological activity in the amount of at least 25%.

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

(1) Telephonic Interview on 4/2/2003 between Examiner Kam and Lauren Sliger

Examiner Kam indicated that, if the claims were amended to explain further the HMGI “biological activity” and if all independent claims included the step of first screening candidate compounds on an immobilized surface, the claims would likely be allowable.

(2) Telephonic Interview on 6/30/2003 between Examiner Kam and Lauren Sliger

Examiner Kam called Applicants’ Attorney and said that she had changed her opinion regarding the claims that were agreed to be allowable during the April 2nd teleconference. The Examiner said that biological activity must be defined more clearly. She also indicated that the downstream target gene is not clear. Specifying interferon β as a downstream target gene in the claims was discussed.